

## Historically Speaking...

### Original Porter County settlers were headed elsewhere

Porter County, today, is considered one of the most desirable residential areas in the Great Lakes region. People are moving here from Chicagoland, from Michigan, from other parts of Indiana.

They are drawn by beautiful scenery, reasonable prices, excellent schools and cities with all the amenities.

However, the original Europeans to reach what is now Porter County were on their way to somewhere else. First, there were the French explorers, traders and missionaries. Then, a Spanish explorer futilely claiming Lake Michigan for his country; then the British and finally the Americans in 1796.

The first white settler was Joseph Bailly, who settled in what now is Westchester County and whose homestead is a major historical site and park.

Others settled nearby, and what eventually would be the town of Chesterton and Westchester Township was on its way.

In 1834, J. P. Ballard built the first home in what now is Valparaiso and the settlement was soon on its way to becoming the seat of government for the county.

The Michigan Central in 1852 and the settlement of Crisman was started, now a part of Portage. Other crews came through Porter County in 1858, building the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne and Chicago Railroad, which ran through Valparaiso and touched off a steady growth in that city.

The quality farmlands which have made the south part of Porter County, especially, a top farming area got its life in the 1860s

with the formation of the Kankakee Valley Draining Association, which would turn swamplands into farmlands.

B. G. Crisman had moved to the northern part of the county in 1871, and Portage Township was formed, named for a county in Ohio.

Portage, now the largest city in Porter County, was a fairly late arrival, spurred by the development of the steel industry -- first U.S. Steel in Gary around 1900 and later by National Steel Co. in 1959.

The Portage-Burns Waterway was developed as a deep port in 1961 and attracted Bethlehem Steel Co. to the area two years later.

Portage was incorporated as a town in 1959, taking in the small communities of Crisman, Garyton and McCool. In 1968 it was incorporated as a city.

**READING  
IS SMART  
FUN**

## Porter County

### Building still booms in Valpo

By Alyce Jarman

New commercial development in Valparaiso sprung up at a rate of more than one major building project per month for 1996.

Gough & Gough Inc. put up a new building on Country Club Rd. for nearly a million dollars (\$923,859).

Following suit, Chester Inc. opened a new business valued at

\$975,000.

But Aetna Development on Strongbow Center Dr. topped all new development costs with an even \$1,000,000.

Valparaiso acquired a new McDonalds and more than a dozen other new businesses to bring the towns commercial growth up to \$7,733,000 for 1996.

## Ridgewood Professional Center



Ridgewood Professional Center is located at 7777 E. Ridge Road in Hobart. It is a professional office park which offers an ideal location in the Hobart/Lake Station/Portage area for the professional looking for superior exposure and accessibility. Strategically located in the heart of the commercial corridor at Routes 6 and 51, Ridgewood Professional Center consists of 15,000 square feet of space. Current tenants are Miracle's Child Care, Healthmasters, Inc., Ed Piscione, CPA; Intensive Care, Inc., Olson Chiropractic, and Robert Ray, DDS.

Ridgewood offers competitive lease rates, custom build-to-suit suites, ample parking and quality construction. Phase Three is planned for 1997. Call 942-3647 for more information.